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SUBJECT: THE CHANGING DYNAMIC IN DARFUR: ZAGHAWA MOVEMENTS TURN  
AGAINST EACH OTHER WITH SOME ASSISTANCE FROM KHARTOUM

REF: A) KHARTOUM 51

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: According to UNAMID, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) now controls the key South Darfur villages of Labado and Muhajarriya after attacking SLM/Minnawi positions. One UNAMID source claimed that the Government of Sudan (GoS) started bombing both JEM and SLM/MM on the periphery of the fighting on January 20. One SLM/MM contact said that SLM/MM has left its positions in its stronghold of Graidia in the hands of the GoS, predicted more fighting in South Darfur, and alleged that the GoS is allowing JEM to stage attacks on rival rebel movements. END SUMMARY.

JEM NOW CONTROLS BOTH LABADO AND MUHAJARRIYA

¶2. (SBU) On January 20, UNAMID contacts confirmed that JEM controls both Labado and the former SLM/MM stronghold of Muhajarriya following fighting in South Darfur beginning on January 15 (reftel). UNAMID contacts also reported that they have credible information that Arab militia are gathering in Shariah, although the forces have not yet engaged in any fighting. According to these sources, SLM/MM appears to be preparing for counterattacks against JEM and is located south of Muhajarriya. Another UNAMID security contact reported that he received reports that the GoS has begun aerial bombing "on the periphery of the fighting to attack both SLM/MM and JEM positions and kill two birds with one stone." This source claimed that fighting between SLM/MM and JEM was ongoing. (Note: Both SLM/MM and other UNAMID contacts contradicted this statement saying that there had been no fighting in two days. Accurate information is difficult to obtain. End note.) Both UNAMID contacts acknowledged difficulties in UNAMID's "information flow" as contradictory reports stream in from the GOS and rival rebel movements.

ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE

¶3. (SBU) UNAMID Security and Political Affairs contacts stated that UN's OCHA and other humanitarian agencies have encouraged reconciliation efforts between JEM and SLM/MM. UNAMID's Political Affairs Section has been actively encouraging the Zaghawa Shura Council to take the lead role in mediation. One SLM/MM representative, Adam Ali Ware, also independently stated that the Zaghawa Shura Council could play an important role in reconciliation efforts. UNAMID contacts acknowledged that UNAMID's senior leadership (most notably the Joint Special Representative and his Deputy) have not been constructively engaged in finding a solution to the JEM-SLM/MM conflict. UN/AU Mediator Bassole has also come and gone without engaging in damage control.

SLM/MM ON GRAIDA, THE CONFLICT'S START, AND JEM'S GOAL

¶4. (SBU) SLM/MM's former Ceasefire Commission Representative (CFC) Adam Ali Ware told poloffs on January 20 that SLM/MM forces left its stronghold of Graidia in the hands of the Government of Sudan.

According to Ware, the King of Graida encouraged SLM/MM to temporarily hand over its control of the village to the GoS forces. Ware stated, "This will free our forces up for other things, and it is better that we have an agreement with the Government now rather than have the Government turn on us later." Ware said that Minnawi authorized this deal, and that discussions about this likely started between Minnawi and Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Hussein before Minnawi's departure for El-Fasher. (Note: "Al-Ahdath" also reported on January 19 that, in coordination with SLM/MM, SAF had taken over control of Graida "to prevent the fall of the region to Khalil's forces." End Note.)

15. (SBU) This SLM/MM contact asserted that Minnawi is "very angry" about JEM's attack on SLM/MM and predicted that there will be further inter-rebel (and inter-Zaghawa) fighting in Dar Es Salaam, Labado, and Muhajarriya. Ware said that it is not clear whether JEM's attack was directed by Khalil Ibrahim, or if it began as a personal conflict between former SLM/MM commander Arku Suliman Dahia and SLM/MM commanders in Muhajarriya. Ware then repeated Minnawi's earlier charges of GoS and Chadian complicity in JEM's attack on SLM/MM.

16. (SBU) UNAMID Political affairs also reported that Minnawi continues to claim that the GoS has cooperated with JEM, allowing JEM units to pass through GoS checkpoints and military positions such as Sayah and Kulkul. According to these sources, Minnawi told UNAMID that Khalil Ibrahim has promised to work with the GoS in return for a position of Vice-President and a GoS promise to spare the life of Abdallaziz Osher, a brother of Khalil Ibrahim who has been in custody in Khartoum since the May 2008 JEM attack on the capital. In exchange, JEM would guarantee that it would be the only military force on the ground and promise there would be no rebel

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attacks against Khartoum following negotiations.

#### SUDANESE MEDIA FOCUS ON THE JEM-SLM/MM FIGHTING

17. (SBU) On January 16th Sudanese Television aired footage of the Wali of South Darfur, Ali Mahmoud, saying that "Minni's forces deserve what they got because the GoS offered to intervene, but Minni's forces refused. Minni's forces should have re-integrated with the Government long ago and become part of SAF, but they delayed, and this is the result." The report also presented an image of Muhajarriya with women crying and some destroyed JEM vehicles and wounded fighters. Also on January 19, Sudanese media reported that both JEM and SLM/MM have suffered significant casualties from the inter-rebel fighting. On January 20, Sudanese press reported that there were over 150 dead and wounded rebels from both SLM/MM and JEM. Another report stated that Minnawi lashed out at the feckless and ineffective UNAMID and accused the hybrid force of "igniting the dispute between the rebel movements."

#### COMMENT

18. (SBU) These clashes are, like the recent Gaza conflict, an unexpected bounty for the Khartoum regime. This latest episode demonstrates starkly the complexity of the current conflict in Darfur. Battles are sometimes waged between the government and rebels; however, over the last year we have witnessed bitter conflict between the rebels themselves, between pro-regime Arab tribes, and between insubordinate Arab proxy militias and government forces. This is hardly the "grinding genocide" that some have described, but rather a chaotic and lawless situation that requires diplomacy to push toward security arrangements on the ground that will lead to a sustainable ceasefire.

19. (SBU) Comment Cot'd: SLM/MM is in a particularly difficult position, and it appears to be a contradiction that Minnawi would simultaneously entrust one of his few remaining strongholds to the GOS and allege that JEM and the GOS are working together. Minnawi told CDA Fernandez on January 16 - as the fighting began - that his movement's strongholds are Muhajiriyya, Greida and Labado. He has now, at least for the moment, lost all three. The wildly divergent UNAMID reports, once again, show the need for better information and a ceasefire mechanism or Darfur monitoring team. It also underscores

the general operational passivity of UNAMID even with over 50 percent of the force on the ground. The Sudanese Media are having a field-day with the inter-rebel fighting, and as the noxious Ali Mahmoud's comments illustrate, have gone so far as to use this as an opportunity to scold the one signatory of the DPA. The GOS will undoubtedly continue to exploit this opportunity politically and militarily for its own cynical goals in war-torn Darfur. It can only benefit Khartoum that the two largest armed Zaghawa movements (one a DPA signatory, one not) have turned against each other and are both (reportedly) relying on Khartoum for assistance. President Bashir must be laughing at this miserable folly where rebels fight each other and the people they are supposed to protect flee to GOS-controlled areas for safety.

FERNANDEZ